

SENIOR LEARNING COMMUNITY



INFORMATION BOOKLET 2024

2024 STAFF STRUCTURE



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Principal



Kate Leigh
Business Manager



Genevieve Erskine
Prep Teacher



Jaymie Lowe
Grade 1 Teacher



Chloe Riseley
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Liesel McGregor
Grade 3/4M Teacher



Airlie Birch
Grade 3/4A Teacher



Alison McDonald
Grade 3/4A Teacher



Alistair Burrell
*Grade 5/6 Teacher /
Learning Specialist*



Brendan King
*Health & Wellbeing
Leader / PE*



Donna Williams
5/6 Teacher (Thursdays)



Jack Simpson
Music Teacher



Gemma Welsh
Prep Specialist



Jo Kara-Cozens
MACC Teacher



Kristin MacKinlay
MARC Teacher



Ann-Maree Convery
Italian Teacher



Hannah Zappelli
*Education Support /
Tutor*



Bree Egan
Education Support



Michaela Sultmann
Education Support



Kirsty Osborne
Education Support



Suzanne Bath
Chaplain

Welcome to our innovative and active Senior Learning Community!

Our Philosophy

Motto:

'Living and Learning Together'

Vision:

'An inclusive community that supports and encourages a love of learning and the skills and mindset to thrive.'

Mission:

In order to fulfil this vision, we nurture our students to:

- be independent lifelong learners who are well equipped to meet the challenges of an ever changing world
- think and learn through problem solving
- achieve personal success and excellence
- demonstrate ethical, social and environmental responsibility
- be active, happy, engaged and productive citizens

Values:

At Birregurra Primary School we value C.A.R.E:

Community - growing positive partnerships between school, home and the broader community

Aspire - setting goals and purposefully working towards their achievement

Respect - for self, others, learning and our environment

Excellence - striving for the highest personal achievement in all aspects of schooling.

We apply these values in our everyday dealings with each other and in the development of our programs and policies. In our school community these values are demonstrated when:

- learners are at the centre of our teaching and learning
- teaching and learning programs encourage deep understanding and a sense of the importance of learning
- students have the opportunity to learn in a positive, caring environment and are encouraged to become self-motivated, life-long learners
- all students are encouraged to achieve their personal best in all that they do
- members of the school community show great confidence in one another and themselves
- students, teachers and parents feel that they are always treated fairly
- students are encouraged to work cooperatively and collaboratively with their peers and other members of the school community, and to be active and responsible citizens.

What is a Senior Learning Community?

The Senior Learning Community at Birregurra Primary School (BPS) consists of students in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Generally, students range in age from 9 to 13 years. We encourage and support our student's individual strengths and interests. We address their learning needs as unique individuals and take care to provide learning tasks that are authentic, relevant and engaging. Each student's interests, stage of development and individual learning goals are catered for. We ensure that students are working toward a Victorian or Australian Curriculum Standard that is developmentally appropriate.

While students at BPS are supported to achieve their personal best, they are also encouraged to work together and share ideas and understandings as successful learning team members. Our students are provided with opportunities to further develop skills in communication and negotiation. We encourage our students to perform leadership roles confidently and responsibly.

Classroom Agreement / Core Values

At the beginning of the year, each class within the Senior Learning Community develops a classroom agreement in consultation with students, allowing and encouraging their input into the process.

Some key elements within the agreement may include:

Getting Along-

- Being tolerant of others (accepting each other's differences)
- Thinking first (considering my reactions and the potential consequences)
- Playing by the rules

Being Confident-

- Accepting myself (recognising everyone's worth and embracing differences)
- Taking new risks (trying new things, even if initially challenging)
- Being independent (not worrying about others' opinions)

Being Persistent-

- Giving effort (understanding that the harder I try, the more successful I will be)
- Working through challenges (acknowledging that sometimes I have to do things that are boring or less enjoyable)

Being Organised-

- Setting goals (both long-term and short-term)
- Planning my time effectively (ensuring everything gets completed)

Being Resilient-

- Keeping things in perspective (using the catastrophe scale)
- Using positive self-talk (cultivating rational thoughts)

Respectful Relationships

Everyone in our community deserves to be respected, valued and treated equally. We know that changes in attitudes and behaviours can be achieved when positive attitudes, behaviours and equality are embedded in our education settings.

Respectful Relationships is about embedding a culture of respect and equality across our entire community, from our classrooms to staff rooms, sporting fields, market days and social events. This approach leads to positive impacts on student's academic outcomes, their mental health, classroom behaviour, and relationships between teachers and students.

With the Respectful Relationships curriculum there are 8 topics that are covered across the year. These include:

- Emotional Literacy
- Personal strengths
- Positive coping
- Problem solving
- Stress management
- Help seeking
- Gender and identity
- Positive gender relationships



Chaplaincy Program

The Chaplain's role includes the pastoral care for the members of school and wider community. Responding to issues and critical incidents as they arise, as well as facilitating proactive relationship building, small group delivery and programs to ensure improved wellbeing outcomes for young people and their communities.

Chaplaincy's role within the school community is to provide the link needed between the physical and psychological wellbeing of the students, parents/caregivers and teaching staff, ensuring that a holistic approach is undertaken as it seeks to produce resilient, resourceful, competent and successful individuals. As chaplain, duties include (but are not limited to):

- Building relationships and being present in the school community
- Implementation of preventative and proactive programs
- Supporting classroom activities or individual students in class
- Assist on school excursions or camps if required
- As needed accompany child or parent to mediation and or court appearances liaise with various service providers and local councils
- Home visits if essential to the child's wellbeing
- Intervention and trauma support in crises and emergencies.

Chaplain's deal with a wide range of issues, including:

- behaviour management;
- social relationship issues such as anger, peer relationships, loneliness and bullying;
- family relationship issues;
- the development of the self - sense of purpose, self-esteem, and mental health;
- the involvement of students in the community;
- addressing issues of social inclusion and racism.

In 2024, our Chaplain, Suzanne Bath, will continue to work alongside our teaching team, supporting students and families with identified needs.

Restorative Practice



What Is Restorative Practice?

Restorative practice is an approach that aims to repair and improve relationships between members of a community. In schools, restorative practice might be used when a pupil is disruptive, breaks agreed rules, damages property or treats others inappropriately.

Restorative practice is led by needs and driven by the values of empathy, respect, honesty, acceptance, responsibility and mutual accountability.

Why use Restorative Practice?

Research indicates a wide range of benefits for schools that adopt restorative practice including improved school attendance, increased staff confidence when dealing with conflicts and bullying, and increased social and emotional competencies. In addition, schools using restorative practice report a reduction in bullying incidents; that pupils are more likely to say that they feel safe in school; improved academic performance; an improved understanding of right and wrong; improved relationships across the whole school.

How can we utilise restorative practice?

Restorative practice works best when there is a culture of empathy and trust. This ensures that people can discuss their feelings openly without the fear that further harm will be caused. When facilitating a restorative conversation, students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour by responding to these questions:

- *Can you tell me what happened?*
- *What were you thinking/feeling at the time?*
- *How have you been thinking/feeling since it happened?*
- *Who do you think has been affected by your actions? How were they affected?*
- *What could you do now to help make things right?*
- *How can we prevent this from happening again in the future?*
- *What can I do to help you?*

These habits are *inclusive*, *create community*, *develop problem solving* around day to day difficulties, *build confidence* and embrace the concepts of being *safe*, *fair* and *friendly*.

Learning in the Senior Learning Community?

Project Based Learning - Let's Investigate!

Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. It comprises research based investigations that integrate topics from across the curriculum. Research based projects incorporate individual, paired or group investigations carried out by the students each term. Together, learning intentions, focuses and timelines are determined. This process of negotiation provides students with choice about their learning and ensures high levels of student engagement and ownership of their learning.

Effective inquiry:

- *Challenges students to think deeply, more of the time*
- *Teaches students about thinking*
- *Deliberately provokes curiosity and wonderment*
- *Invites students' voices into the learning process*
- *Helps students make connections between the 'known' and the 'new'*
- *Explicitly teaches the skills and processes used by researchers*
- *Focuses as much on process as they do on content.*



Mathematics

Our Mathematics approach assists students to develop skills in the four proficiencies of understanding, fluency, reasoning and problem solving. Maths sessions are planned around the curriculum focus areas of Number & Algebra, Measurement & Geometry and Statistics & Probability. Students are encouraged to articulate their thinking when explaining their findings in their maths learning journals. To cater for a wide range of ability levels, we use open-ended tasks or provide different entry points for students working on the same topic. Maths sessions include shared, partnered, group and individual learning tasks.



In 2024 we will continue to use 'Essential Assessments' to support the development of all students in the area of numeracy. Essential Assessment is a Victorian Curriculum model that delivers a whole school approach to formative and summative assessment in schools. This program provides a personalised and differentiated online assessment and curriculum model that diagnostically assesses each student and provides them with an aligned curriculum to grow each students' knowledge from their current understanding.

Literacy

The Senior Learning Community utilises a structure that supports students to develop the daily habits of reading, writing, spelling, exploring vocabulary and working independently; leading to a lifetime of literacy independence.

We have a focus on the writing process of planning, drafting or composing, revising or editing, and publishing, actively involving students in purposeful writing around which both their authorial and secretarial skills and understandings can develop.

In the Senior Learning Community students begin to move from learning to read, to reading to learn. This is achieved by focusing on strategies such as Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding Vocabulary and includes goal-setting with students during individual conferences.

As part of the Reading Program, students select 'Good Fit' books to read both at home and in class. 'Good Fit' books are those independently decoded and comprehended by students at their individual reading level. This is important if students are to progress as readers.

Sound Write Program

At Birregurra Primary School, all grades use the Sounds Write phonics approach. Sounds Write provides students with a highly structured instructional approach to teaching children to read and spell. The Sounds Write program teaches the essential skills of blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation. Daily structured 'mini lessons' in the senior community support students to understand how sentences are the building blocks of writing and how words are the foundation for this. Mini lessons also teach vocabulary, morphology and etymology.



What Are Etymology and Morphology?

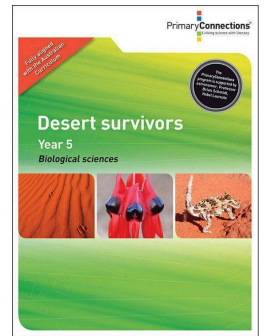
Etymology is the history of a word or phrase and traces its developments and relationships. Morphology is the science and the study of word-formation.

Speaking & Listening

Speaking and listening is crucial to a child's literacy development (reading, writing and spelling). At BPS, we plan for opportunities for students to communicate effectively and cooperatively with their peers. We provide learning experiences that encourage language development. Question posing and answering, presentations and shared reflection time all provide opportunities for students to discuss and explain their learning.

Science & Inquiry

At BPS we utilise the wonderful Primary Connections 5Es teaching and learning model and resources. The units within Primary Connections are based on an inquiry-orientated teaching and learning model. Students use their prior knowledge and literacies to develop explanations for their hands-on experiences of scientific phenomena. Students have opportunities to represent and re-represent their developing understanding. They are engaged actively in the learning process. Students develop investigation skills and an understanding of the nature of science.



Teaching and learning progresses through five phases: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

Engage

Each unit begins with a lesson that mentally engages students with an activity or question. It captures their interest, provides an opportunity for them to express what they know about the concept or skill being developed, and helps them to make connections between what they know and the new ideas.

Explore

Students carry out hands-on activities in which they can explore the concept or skill. They grapple with the problem or phenomenon and describe it in their own words. This phase allows students to acquire a common set of experiences that they can use to help each other make sense of the new concept or skill.

Explain

Only after students have explored the concept or skill does the teacher provide the concepts and terms used by the students to develop explanations for the phenomenon they have experienced.

Elaborate

This phase provides opportunities for students to apply what they have learned to new situations and so develop a deeper understanding of the concept or greater use of the skill. It is important for students to discuss and compare their ideas with each other during this phase.

Evaluate

The final phase provides an opportunity for students to review and reflect on their own learning and new understanding and skills. It is also when students provide evidence for changes to their understanding, beliefs and skills.

In 2024, students will engage in the following inquiry units:

- **Term 1:** Launching Learners
- **Term 2:** History Gold Rush
- **Term 3:** Olympics - Design & STEAM
- **Term 4:** Change Detectives - Chemical & Physical Science



Intertwined within our Science and Inquiry units is STEAM activities. STEAM promotes positive experiences of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. It provides our students the skills and capabilities they need now and for the future. STEAM touches every aspect of our lives, from our smartphones to the technologies that enable us to explore the

world around us and outer space. It also drives innovation in our fast-changing global economy. To succeed in this environment, and for our students to continue to prosper into the future, they need a strong foundation in STEAM.

Physical Education

Students in the Senior Learning Community are all involved in weekly physical education (P.E.) and sports lessons, unless they have received a parent-approved exemption. The P.E. program places a strong emphasis on fostering fitness and skill development, as well as encouraging teamwork, cooperation, and enjoyment. Those in the 3-6 community can potentially represent the school in interschool athletics and cross-country events beyond the Polwarth level [district, region, state] if they qualify. Additionally, they have the chance to participate in round-robin format programs covering netball, football, cricket, and basketball.



Our school is also fortunate to have the support of the Sporting Schools initiative. At various times, students may have the opportunity to participate in Sporting Schools programs that have previously encompassed basketball, gymnastics, golf, and tennis.

Swimming

In 2024, students in the Senior Learning Community will participate in swimming lessons at Bluewater in Colac. Lessons will take place each Friday afternoon in Term Two for an eight week period. Lessons involve a half hour practical lesson in the pool as well as a water safety lesson, supporting students to develop their knowledge of how to be safe in and around the water.



Bike Education

Students in Grades 5/6 have the opportunity to participate in an intensive Bike Education Program. This is facilitated by Mr King, an accredited Bike Ed instructor. At the conclusion of the program, students engage in a road ride around Birregurra, utilising their skills and knowledge. There is also an opportunity for selected students to participate in the Bike Ed Challenge in Colac. Our schools placed second overall in 2023, an amazing effort in our first year participating.

ICT

Students in the Senior Learning Community have access to a range of ICT including iPads and laptops. Each class has a flat screen television with access to apple TV for teaching and learning. Laptops are currently used by students as tools to enhance learning in many curriculum areas. Protocols and guidelines for internet use, including computer etiquette and cyber safety, are regularly revised.



In 2024, we will continue to extend our Digital learning with the use of virtual conferencing tools such as Google Classroom, Seesaw, and Webex. Virtual conferencing will provide learning opportunities to connect with other classrooms and teachers outside of our school. It will help us interact and authenticate learning by connecting with experts and specialists, such as the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Museum Victoria, Victorian Institute of Sport and Arts Victoria, bringing experts into our classroom.

Ultimately the core focus is upon improving and enhancing student learning. Using contemporary ways to support students to think, analyse and construct knowledge. This is a very exciting teaching and learning challenge and we look forward to sharing our journey.

Specialist Subjects

- **Art:** Jo Kara- Cozens (3/4s) Donna Williams (5/6) - weekly 1 hour sessions
- **Library:** Kristin MacKinlay - weekly 1 hour sessions
- **Italian:** Ann-Maree Convery - weekly 1 hour sessions
- **PE:** Brendan King - weekly 1 hour sessions
- **Music:** Jack Simpson - weekly 40 minute sessions

Students attend specialist classes each week. Specialist subjects include Italian, Art, Library, Music and Physical Education. Engaging in these specialist classes provides a multitude of benefits that contribute to students' overall development. These specialised subjects contribute to a well-rounded educational experience. Exposure to Italian enriches cultural awareness and global perspectives, while Art classes encourage creativity and self-expression. Library sessions not only enhance literacy but also instil effective research skills. Music classes contribute to the development of musical talents and cognitive abilities. Physical Education, exemplified by the Term One program with Mr. King, focuses on athletics training, promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and sportsmanship. This specialised preparation is particularly valuable as students gear up for School House Sports and the interschool Polwarth Sports. The combination of these subjects ensures a holistic education, nurturing skills and values that extend beyond the classroom and into various aspects of students' lives.



Camps, Excursions & Incursions

2024 is set to be another busy and action-packed year!

Some of the planned and booked activities include:

- Year 5/6 attending Angahook Camp, while Grade 3/4 will have their camp at Sovereign Hill.
- Students in Grade 5/6 may also have the opportunity to attend a regional camp later in the year. Additional information, camp lists, and payment plans will be provided in advance for both camps.
- 3-6 COPACC performance of 'The Peasant Prince' on Tuesday, 6th August.

Every year, we participate in a variety of incredible incursions and excursions, including cultural and educational visits. We are eager to share these enriching experiences with you. Keep your eye out in the weekly school newsletter for more information.

Student Leadership

Senior Learning Community members are encouraged and supported to undertake roles of responsibility throughout the school. Roles include recycling, waste management and sport's shed monitoring. Students in Years 5 and 6 are eligible to be nominated and peer elected as:

- School Captains
- Junior School Council President, Secretary & Treasurer
- House Captains for our four school houses; Sladen, Skene, Strachan and Beal.



Students in Years 3 and 4 are eligible to be voted onto Junior School Council.

Our student leaders work together to organise whole school fundraising events that support not only our school community, but funds for many worthy charities.



Buddy Program

In the initial weeks of school, Prep children are supported by a Year 6 buddy, fostering a supportive connection between the two. These senior buddies play a pivotal role in making the transition from Preschool to school a smoother and more comfortable experience for the Prep children. The Year 6 students enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to serve as buddies, finding joy in assisting and guiding the new Preps during this crucial phase of their academic journey. This buddy system not only helps in the practical aspects of transitioning but also fosters a sense of companionship and mentorship within the school community.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a whole school curriculum focus. Classrooms encourage recycling, composting and 'nude food' (food without packaging) to help minimise waste. Students are also encouraged to switch off power when it is not needed, conserve water and think responsibly in regards to all aspects of the environment.

Homework

Students in the Senior Learning Community are expected to read at home daily for a minimum of twenty minutes. Students are required to return their diary daily with evidence of home reading. Please support and encourage your child to make their commitment to reading at home a positive one. Further to this students may be asked to complete unfinished work or complete research around inquiry based topics.

Student Learning Diary

Each student in the Senior Learning Community is provided with a diary. This diary is for recording home reading, homework tasks and important dates. Teachers will also use student diaries to communicate with home and welcome parents to do the same.

Student diaries are a great way to communicate day to day messages. We are more than happy to be contacted by phone, email, SeeSaw and XUNO to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress and wellbeing. No matter is too big or too small for our shared attention.

Reports & Interviews

Parent-teacher conversations are scheduled every term to facilitate open communication and collaboration. Comprehensive reports, detailing students' progress and achievements, are sent home toward the conclusion of Terms 2 and 4. Throughout the academic year, student learning goals are established and regularly reviewed to ensure continuous improvement. In instances where additional support is needed, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) may be formulated and put into action to address specific needs and enhance overall learning experiences. This proactive approach aims to engage both parents and teachers in the ongoing educational journey, fostering a supportive and enriching environment for each student.

Parent & Community Helpers

We welcome and appreciate parent, family or community helpers at BPS. From listening to reading to helping in the garden or during classroom clubs, a thriving learning environment is further enriched with community support. If you have some time or skills to share please contact us. We would love to hear from you.



Other Useful Information

School Website:

Information regarding special events, school calendar, excursions, newsletters etc. can be found on the school website: www.birregurraps.vic.edu.au

For those with Smartphones, information about Birregurra P.S. can be downloaded from the **Xuno App**



Student Absences

Preferred means of communication for student absences is via direct communication with the class teacher: **verbal** (in person or via phone), or **written** (via email or note/comment recorded in the learning diary, XUNO, SeeSaw). Alternatively, parents may wish to directly notify the office:

School office: 5236 2222

School email: birregurra.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Liesel McGregor: liesel.mcgregor@education.vic.gov.au

Alison McDoanlad: alison.mcdonald@education.vic.gov.au

Airlie Birch: airlie.birch@education.vic.gov.au

Donna Williams: donna.williams@education.vic.gov.au

Alistair Burrell: alistair.burrell@education.vic.gov.au

Assembly

School Assembly is held every second Friday at 2.45pm. Parents and family are welcome to attend. Whole school news is shared and student achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Lunch Orders

Students are able to order their lunch every Friday from the General Store via QuickCliq. Orders are due by 9:00am the Thursday prior. Volunteer parent helpers generally provide 'school canteen' throughout the year. More information to come!

Payments

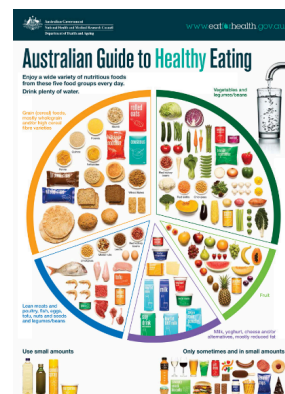
Payments can be made at the office via EFTPOS, or alternatively BPay, direct deposit, credit card using the XUNO platform.

Hats

From mid-August (exact date to be set by the school annually) to 30 April, all students must wear a sun protective hat that shades the face, neck and ears for all outdoor activities. Hats may also be worn for all outdoor activities outside of the August to April time period, by parent or student choice.

Healthy Eating

Students are encouraged to have a water drink bottle in class. Fruit breaks are offered during the morning when students are allowed to snack on fruit and veggies. As part of our school-wide environmental awareness program, we encourage 'nude food'. This initiative also helps us limit the number of wrappers in our school grounds.



Personal Items

Please ensure that all items are clearly named. Lost property is more readily returned when labelled.

Uniform

Children are expected to wear the school uniform consistently, including broad-brimmed or bucket hats as specified above. Additionally, it is recommended that students bring their own sunscreen. We kindly request that children avoid bringing precious or expensive items to school, as any personal belongings brought on the premises are not the responsibility of the school.

Feedback

We appreciate the trust you place in us to work with you in raising your child. Education is our focus and we strive to provide a rich learning environment. **We are constantly looking for ways to improve and your feedback is encouraged.** If you have any thoughts or ideas as to how we can improve, please let us know.

Thanks for reading all this information. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us!

Alistair Burrell, Donna Williams, Liesel McGregor, Airlie Birch & Alison McDonald

Senior Teaching Team